(b) to (d) No, Sir, However, a proposal has been received from the Government of Karnataka for advising National Mineral Development Corporation Limited (NMDC) to surrender Block 'C' of Kumaraswamy mine to enable the State Government to lease it to a private company which is setting up a steel plant in that area.

Schemes and programmes for the disabled persons

671. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister or WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the schemes and programmes of Government for the disabled persons in the country;

(b) whether Government have formulated any National Plan of Action for the disabled persons;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (SHRI K.V. THANGKA BALU): (a) Major Schemes and Programmes of the Ministry of Welfare for the disabled persons in the country are mentioned in the statement placed at statement (*see* below).

(b) and (d) National Plan of Action for the disabled persons has not been formulated. However, National policy on Disabled is under formulation.

Statement

1. Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for the Disabled

Under this scheme, assistance is provided to voluntary organisations to run rehabilitation programmes for the disabled. It is a comprehensive scheme covering different areas of rehabilitation—physical, psychological, social and economic. Financial support is given to the extent of 90% of the total project cost (upto 95% for the rural areas) for recurring items like staff salary, maintenance charges, contingencies and non-recurring items like construction of building, equipment, furniture. Financial assistance is given for the projects such as vocational training centres, special schools, counselling centres, hostels, training centres for personnels, placement services etc.

2. Establishment and Development of Special Schools:

The scheme envisages assistance to the NGO's to the extent of 90% for establishment and upgradation of special schools in four major disabilities—orthopsedio, hearing and speech, visual and mentally retarded. Priority under the scheme is given to setting up of schools and districts where there are no special schools at present. Both recurring and non-recurring expenditure is supported by the Ministry.

3. Assistance to Organisations for persons with Cerebral Palsy and Mental Retardation for Manpower Development

Under the scheme, assistance is given to NGOs upto the extent of 100% for running training courses for researchers in the area of Cerebral Palsy and Mental Retardation.

4. Assistance to Organisations for Rehabilitation of leprosy Cured Persons:

Under the scheme, assistance is given upto 90% to voluntary organisations in developing programmes for rehabilitation of leprosy cured persons

5. National Institute:

In order to effectively deal with the multi-dimensional problems of the handicapped population, the following four National Institutes have been set up. These Institutes are apex level Organisations in the field of training, vocational guidance, counselling, research, rehabilitation, development of suitable services modules. These Institutes also serve as premier documentation and information centres in their area of disability:—

(1) National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, Dehradun.
(2) National Institute for the Orthopaedically Handicapped, Calcutta.
(3) Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for the hearing Handicapped, Bombay.
(4) National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad.

In addition to these the following two Institutions have been set up primarily as service institutions for providing general services to the handicapped persons:—

(1) Institute for the Physically Handicapped, New Delhi.
(2) National Institute of Rehabilitation Training & Research, Oletpur, Orissa.

6. Employment:

(i) 3% vacancies is reserved for physically handicapped % each for the visual, hearing and Orthopaedically handicapped in Group 'C' & 'D' posts Central Govt. and Public Sector Undertakings. Similar reservations have been given by some State Governments. The handicapped including the blind are also have age concession in the upper age limit and relaxation in the medical standards for entry into Government service.

(ii) 35 Special Employment Exchanges and special cells for the handicapped persons have been set up exclusively to help the handicapped in getting gainful employment. Besides the Normal employment exchanges also help the handicapped persons in finding suitable employment.

(iii) Seventeen Vocational Rehabilitation Centres have been set up to assess the residual ability of the diabled, arrange their training and place them in employment.

(iv) Self-employment is promoted through the following:—

(a) Allotment of vending stalls, kiosks, petty shops;
(b) Loans from Nationalised Banks at nominal rates of interest under differential rate of interest scheme;
(c) Allotment of public telephone booths;
(d) Reservation in distribution of petrol pumps, kerosene depots etc.

7. Scheme of Assistance to Disabled for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances:

The main objective of the scheme is to assist needy physically handicapped persons in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured aids and appliances that promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation. The scheme is implemented through centres run by the Companies, registered under Companies Act, registered Societies, Trusts or any other institutions recognised by the Ministry of Welfare. Both Governmental and Non-Governmental agencies are thus engaged for the implementation of the scheme.

Under the scheme, aids and appliances upto value of Rs. 3600/- are distributed to the disabled persons free of costs if their monthly income is upto Rs. 1200/- and at 50% of the cost if the income is between Rs. 1201/- and 2500/-.

Deteriorating Functioning of UGC

672. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the functioning of the U.G.C. has been deteriorating over the years and that the U.G.C. is virtually non-functional.

(b) if so, whether Government have examined the circumstances leading to the sorry-state of affairs in U.G.C.;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) what remedial measures have been taken by Government in this regard?